

Subject: **Gold King Mine Release - Regional Update**
Date: **30 September 2015**

Background

The Gold King Mine near Silverton, Colorado has had a continuous discharge of acidic mine drainage that is a historic contributor of lead, arsenic, zinc, copper, and cadmium into the Cement Creek drainage of the Animas River watershed. On August 5, 2015, an estimated 3 million gallons of mine wastewater released into the upper portions of Cement Creek, and into the Animas River.

- Based on EPA surface water data collected following the August 5, 2015 Gold King Mine release, San Juan River water quality in Navajo Nation has returned to pre-event conditions. EPA issued a press release on August 19, 2015 stating that water quality in the San Juan River has now returned to levels measured before the release entered the Navajo Nation.
- EPA Region 9 continues to coordinate with representatives from the Navajo Nation, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the States of AZ, Utah, NM, and federal agencies Bureau of Reclamation, the National Park Service, and US Geological Survey. EPA R9 is coordinating with R8, R6, involved State agencies and Navajo Nation to develop a long-term sampling strategy for implementation by the three EPA Regions.
- The EPA national website now includes both San Juan River and Lake Powell data.

Current Actions

- **Sampling on the San Juan River is undertaken twice a week at sampling locations on the Navajo Nation. Force protection is being provided by the Navajo Nation.**
- **EPA Region 9 is demobilizing the remaining 4 EPA-installed water tanks on the Navajo Nation. EPA contractors inspected and sampled the water in each remaining tank that contained water (7 tanks contained water). Sampling results indicate that all of the water in the tanks met all applicable standards for irrigation and livestock use. These findings are consistent with previous findings by the NN EPA. The remaining water tanks will be demobilized and removed by 2 October.**
- **The Bureau of Indian Affairs is maintaining two watering tank locations, at Hogback and Shiprock, until 30 September 2015. BIA did stop refilling these tanks on Sept. 5, and since then Navajo Nation has been refilling and maintaining the tanks.**
- **EPA will accept requests for hay deliveries until 30 September. Five hay deliveries will be made on 2 October, to the following Chapters: Shiprock, Hogback, Oljato, Red Mesa and Mexican Water. September. As of 25 September, EPA has delivered 7,296 bales of hay. An additional 1,920 bales are in 'pending delivery' status.**
- **FOSC Donn Zuroski and 3 Coast Guard Incident Management Assist Team members are assisting the NN EOC operations for the week of 28 September in Window Rock, AZ. The NN EOC is moving from an emergency response to a recovery mode. FOSC Zuroski is demobilizing on 2 October and the Coast Guard IMAT members are demobilizing on 3 October. EPA and the Coast Guard will implement the demobilization plan on 2 October.**
- **EPA has been invited to attend a meeting of the Ten Tribes Partnership of the Colorado River Basin to discuss the Gold King Mine response and coordination of future actions to protect Tribal Colorado River water quality. This meeting is scheduled for 14 October in Las Vegas, NV.**
- The Public Hotline number (1-844-607-9700)

Personnel in the NN EOC, Window Rock, AZ
1 R9 OSC, 3 USCG NSF/IMAT members